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Gary Shapiro

University of Richmond, gshapiro@richmond.edu

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II. STUDIES

Approaches to Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics of Action

British Hermeneutics and the Genesis of Empiricism

Gary Shapiro

In an essay of 1961, "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," Paul Ricoeur has suggested that the narratives which we construct of the history of philosophy tend either toward excessive integration or disintegration. On the first alternative we tend to view the history of philosophy, or a segment of it, as a succession of systems understood from the perspective of that system closest to our own philosophical inclinations; on the second alternative we tend toward a dispersive attention toward specific problems, thinkers, and texts. Neither approach is satisfying, but Ricoeur maintains that in the history of philosophy, as contrasted to other historical and narrative forms, we are forced toward either the integrative or the dispersive goal. Both tendencies represent a suppression of history. Yet the history of philosophy, like other histories, Ricoeur suggests, can *disclose* historicity, even in the paradoxical form of showing that in fact the events—thoughts, texts, philosophical careers—of which it is composed do not succeed in maintaining an absolute singularity or dissolving themselves into an absolute system:

history is history only to the extent that it has reached neither absolute discourse nor absolute singularity—to the extent that the meaning of it remains confused and entangled. Lived history is all that which happens prior to its decomposition and suppression by the system and singularity.¹

Ricoeur suggests then that we will never reach either ultimate Hegelian systematicity nor Nietzschean difference in philosophical practice or in the history of philosophy, but that either can serve as a regulative idea for the philosopher. The philosophical historian of philosophy can only see the *historicity* of his subject matter by an awareness of both.

In the spirit of these pointers from Ricoeur I want to look at some narrative tendencies within the history of philosophy that are relevant to the continuing confrontation and series of adjustments between philosophical analysis as it has been practiced in the English speaking world and the hermeneutical tendencies within phenomenological and continental thought. Let us begin by noting that one way in which many philosophical projects acknowledge historicity rather than seeking an elusive universal system or an impossible individuality is through their concern with the *discourse of others*, especially as found in the canonical texts of a religious or literary tradition, or in those of philosophy itself. To be concerned with the other's texts requires an admission that one's own discourse is embedded in history and is not fully pliable to either of the two poles identified in Ricoeur's analysis. In the re-examination of the history of philosophy that is taking place today in the light of such tendencies as the phenomenological hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur, Derrida's deconstruction of the text and Foucault's exploration of the tangled genealogies of knowledge and power, it may be useful to take another look at the hermeneutics which does not simply operate on the field of the history of philosophy but which is already part of that whose history we would narrate.

T.W. Adorno raises the question of philosophy's relation to hermeneutical thought in an essay on Walter Benjamin. He observes that Benjamin distanced himself from what he saw as philosophy by maintaining "a determined Alexandrianism," philosophizing in his own manner only by means of commenting on already existing texts. Here as elsewhere Adorno praises Benjamin's transvaluation of the notion of the sacred text, while regretting his neglect of many dimensions of traditional philosophy which might have given more power to his insights:

For him philosophy consisted essentially in commentary and criticism. . . . The concern of philosophy with previously existent, codified doctrines is less foreign

to its great tradition than Benjamin might have believed. . . It was only after they had banded together to form their own discipline and had begun to lose touch with their own thought that philosophers all deemed it necessary to cover themselves by beginning before the creation of the world, or, if at all possible, to incorporate it into the system.²

Adorno is making two very interesting claims that suggest a specific approach to the history of philosophy. He says first that philosophy tends in some essential way to be hermeneutical and only later, in a derivative or deviant form aims at an unmediated knowledge of *die Sachen selbst*. Second, he offers an historical and political analysis of how philosophy sometimes deviates from its hermeneutic tendency. Adorno suggests that philosophers who have come to form a unified group of some kind no longer need to worry about the *hybris* of a textually unmediated approach to reality, because they can rely on the strength of a group that will defend such an unmediated approach as a collective goal. Such practice generates an illusion of collective strength which must be maintained by ontological claims. In the same spirit we might ask whether even such groups of philosophers who are linked by social and institutional bonds can be altogether independent of any textual tradition. Even analytic philosophers in the twentieth century tend to have their own sacred texts (such as Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations*); they communicate essentially in writing and work, more or less consciously, within a framework of generic and stylistic constraints which are susceptible of rhetorical analysis.

The opposition between philosophy with an explicitly hermeneutical dimension and philosophy which claims that the hermeneutical dimension is irrelevant is not new. Today it may be taken very roughly to coincide with the division between "analytical" and "continental" philosophy. Such a division is in part what Richard Rorty appears to have in mind when he suggests that these two philosophical movements are the public relations arms of C. P. Snow's "two cultures," the scientific and the literary.³ If one is disposed to agree with Adorno that in some sense philosophy is always already hermeneutical, one may be compelled to inquire how it is that it can also deny or obscure its hermeneutical dimension.

In this paper I want to look at some aspects of philosophy as it has been carried on in the English language in order to validate and exemplify Adorno's observations. To the extent that philosophy can be hermeneuti-

cal once again, it can take a hermeneutical approach to those texts which are ostensibly anti-hermeneutical. The most significant of these anti-hermeneutical tendencies in contemporary philosophy is, of course, in the mainline of Anglo-American philosophy that is indicated by mentioning the names of Hume, Russell, and Quine. Such a chronological succession is also one of increasing distance from hermeneutical thought, so it is appropriate to begin with Quine's extreme position. Quine, of course, takes no notice of the hermeneutical either as it is explicitly formulated by "continental" thinkers or in the more informal way in which it has been practiced by a wide variety of philosophers, including even a few who could be claimed for the "analytical" camp. Most fundamentally this can be traced to Quine's thesis concerning the indeterminacy of translation which renders all hermeneutical activity meaningless. According to that thesis there can be no rational criterion for preferring one translation of a linguistic work to another; every translation is conventional. Nevertheless, translation can proceed by appealing to those conventions of simplicity and comprehensive explanatory power which conventionalists conventionally invoke. Quine's thesis, I suggest, derives from a more comprehensive but implicit dichotomy concerning meaning: Either a linguistic work (ranging from a sentence to a set of texts) has one proper and determinate meaning that can be ascertained by a unique set of criteria or it may, in principle, become the subject of any interpretation or translation whatsoever. The thesis may be formulated in relatively technical terms but it is worth looking into an aspect of the tradition of English philosophy which comes close to these views, supports them, and that tends to be invoked by contemporary "analytical" thinkers who would bolster their procedures by appeal to historical precedent. (Naturally such an appeal to the example of a philosophical tradition is strictly inconsistent if it is thought that one understands *the* meaning of an argument or text within that tradition; for from the standpoint of the indeterminacy of translation there is no such privileged meaning but only the one which is most useful for some purpose or other.)

Looking at Quine as the heir of a philosophical tradition, then, we observe that the implicit dichotomy of indeterminate versus absolute meaning is one that he seems to share with Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. The classical trio of British empiricism, however, had a horror of indeterminacy and sought to avoid it by holding to the primacy of mental contents,

to Lockean ideas or Humean impressions, which Quine went on to label as a dogma of empiricism. Now Locke, Berkeley and Hume have achieved canonical status in the mainline of Anglo-American philosophy, and it is a striking fact that many philosophers who in general might reject any close conceptual link between philosophy and its history continue to write commentaries on and exegeses of their works. Moreover when contemporary criticisms of the provincial or trivial character of contemporary analytical philosophy are expressed, there is a tendency to appeal to the honorable example of the three empiricists.

What I want to outline here is a way of looking at the history of British philosophy that will help to explain both the emergence of the canonical status which later philosophers and scholars have accorded to Locke, Berkeley, and Hume and the shaping of the implicit dichotomy of single and indeterminate meaning which the canonical thinkers share with Quine; the latter is a more deeply rooted dogma of empiricism than those two which Quine has identified. In order to inquire both into the formation of the canon and the dichotomous view of meaning, it is necessary to look sympathetically at that period in which British philosophy was more explicitly concerned with "commentary and criticism" and "with previously existent, codified doctrines" (to recall Adorno's words). If we seek a convenient but still somewhat arbitrary point of demarcation between the hermeneutical and the canonical phase of British philosophy it can be found in the division between Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. Although published together, it is the second which has become a standard part of the university curriculum and of the hegemonic canon of analytical philosophy. In the first, as Locke says on the title page "The False Principles and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer and His Followers are Detected and Overthrown." Filmer had argued in his *Patriarcha* that the Bible shows that God granted political sovereignty to Adam and to his male descendants by primogeniture. Locke felt that it was necessary to reply to this hermeneutical argument with one of his own, so the first of the *Two Treatises* is essentially concerned with the proper interpretation of the Bible, read in response to the provocation of Filmer's reading. Although both Locke and Filmer believe that the relevant passages in the Bible have a single sense, they disagree sharply concerning what that sense is; both are already very far from the medieval and Renaissance conception of a polysemous or multivalent text. But the canonization of Locke, Berkeley and Hume tends to draw the line here, excluding the first of the *Two*

Treatises from the canon, presumably on the grounds that it is excessively topical and polemical. Yet to make such an exclusion is to impose on the history of philosophy one's own prejudice (*Vorurteil*, as Gadamer would say) that philosophy is atemporal and constructive rather than historical and always already engaged with a multiplicity of discourses. It is precisely this prejudice which can be called in question through a dialogue with early British philosophy.

So far I have suggested a regressive movement of two steps; first from Quine to the canonical group of Locke, Berkeley and Hume and second to the division in the earliest thinker of that group between more and less hermeneutical tendencies; now I want to suggest a further backward step to Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes is a thinker who stands in a somewhat ambivalent relation to the standard canon. His constructive materialism, his nominalism and his vehement rejection of traditional philosophical authority should qualify him for a place; yet his rationalistic tendencies make him a less than ideal empiricist and his rejection of scholasticism is part of his extended concern with questions of Biblical interpretation and the authority of various texts. To the extent that Hobbes has been assimilated to the canon, the assimilation has depended upon an even more radical severance of texts than the one noted in Locke's case. Take Hobbes's major work, the *Leviathan*: our printed selections and curricula tend to draw from only the first two parts of the book, which are concerned with man and the commonwealth, ignoring the third part "Of a Christian Common-Wealth," largely devoted both to a substantive interpretation of the Bible and the construction of a hermeneutics of power, and the fourth, "Of the Kingdom of Darkness," which both analyzes the material and political force associated with various textual traditions and proposes a reform of the university curriculum that would drastically reduce the authority of Aristotle, Cicero, and classical learning.

Hobbes may be the most ancient ancestor of Quine, insofar as he employs a dichotomy between absolutely determinate and indeterminate meaning in his hermeneutics. At the same time he is much more tradition-oriented than the common picture of the English language canon allows because he sees the need to offer an extended account of the Biblical text and of the general principles by which texts are interpreted. Hobbes combines these two themes by sketching an historical hermeneutics in which power and sovereignty are the central concepts. On his view the Biblical text is not timelessly determinate or indeterminate in meaning; rather, the right of author-

itative interpretation, which can stabilize determinate meanings, is one which derives from the rule of a Christian sovereign. For on Hobbes's own reading of the Bible, such sovereigns are its authorized interpreters. When no sovereignty obtains, and men are in the state of nature, their natural liberty leads to an anarchy of interpretations which is the hermeneutic parallel of the war of all against all.⁴ Just as the establishment of sovereignty puts an end to war in the usual sense, it also puts an end to the war of interpretations. Established and consolidated power is the key to consistent interpretation. In some of his early texts Nietzsche acknowledges an indebtedness to Hobbes's connection between power and meaning, although his own tendency is to glorify and ontologize the multiplicity and diversity of the will to power; the *Übermensch*, it turns out, is more like a deconstructionist literary critic than like a Hobbesian Christian sovereign.⁵

The recall of Nietzsche's carnivalesque celebration of a playful multiplicity of meanings may also help us to understand Hobbesian hermeneutics in relation to those discourses which were its contemporary *others*, namely the profusion of claims to individual freedom, both in politics and in the interpretation of the Bible, which characterized the period of the English Civil War. In attempting to establish a definitive Biblical hermeneutics, Hobbes is doing more than, as the conventional interpretation goes, making a gesture toward a religious tradition for which he has little real respect or simply repeating Calvinist doctrine in the idiom of his own materialist philosophy; these stale accounts of his concerns with the hermeneutical are already victims of philosophy's retrospective illusion that it has always been an autonomous form of discourse. On the basis of that illusion one can dismiss inconvenient aspects of the history of philosophy and large portions of its texts by separating an autonomous core of conceptual analysis from an adventitious series of pressures or influences with which the core has become encrusted. But perhaps the metaphor of core and removable crust is mistaken.

Hobbes's fascination with the questions of Biblical hermeneutics appears in a new light when viewed in the context of what Christopher Hill has called *The World Turned Upside Down*.⁶ This metaphor, as Gadamer reminds us in a study of Hegel's *verkehrte Welt*, derives from the carnivalesque inversion of stable political and religious values which was a regular part of life in the late middle ages and in early modern times.⁷ In the movements which culminated in the civil war of the 1640's, the world was turned upside down by men and women who rejected traditional limita-

tions on politics and culture. The profusion of political movements, of which the best known are the Levellers, the Diggers, and the Ranters, exemplified and sometimes argued for a prolific anarchism of social, political, and religious life. In a Christian culture such anarchism finds its crucial and exemplary contest to be the right of all believers to interpret the scripture for themselves. If religious truth is what the sincere heart interprets it to be, everything is, in principle, permitted; so the history of social agitation and change in this tumultuous time works through a dialectic of the sacred, the everyday and the artistic with which we are familiar from the experience of the 1960's in the United States, France, and some other sites of cultural revolution.

It is in this context that we must think not only of Hobbes's insistence on the sole authority of the sovereign, the mechanistic metaphysics by which he suggests that chaos is only an appearance, and his rejection of the popular forms of political and moral spontaneity, but also of his attack on the classical philosophical and rhetorical tradition. Although Hobbes was a translator of Homer and Thucydides he argues that the classical tradition's appeal to the philosophical principle of analogy, the poetic principle of metaphor, and the rhetorician's concern with the actual situation of his audience were all too conducive to political, hermeneutical and moral chaos.

Yet to a large extent the repression which Hobbes sought to exercise upon the buzzing, blooming confusion of English life in the 1640's has been ironically applied to his own position in the history of English philosophy. The Hobbes of the philosophers is a rather boring materialist and theorist of absolute sovereignty, while literary and cultural history reproduce the image of the mechanistic Calvinist-cum-ambivalent-humanist. But Hobbes the passionate hermeneut, terrified of the political chaos of free interpretation, does not usually emerge clearly in either of these discourses. In any case this last Hobbes is by and large unknown to, or perhaps we should say *repressed* in the unconscious of English speaking philosophy. His concern with power and with the hermeneutical-political extremes of the dialectic of unity and multiplicity can be unearthed only with great difficulty from the standard foundationalist paradigm which suggests that Locke, Berkeley, and Hume were simply doing what comes naturally in orienting philosophy toward questions having to do with correspondence or non-correspondence between representations and their objects.⁸

But before going on to consider just how the Locke/Berkeley/Hume paradigm came to be part of the canon in Anglo-American philosophy, we should ask what those other discourses were which Hobbes rejected and which were part of the world of Renaissance humanism. Much of this world was one of commentaries on texts, of the sort produced by Ficino and the Neoplatonists. It was a world of speculative hermeneutics, drawing not only on such esoteric sources such as astrology and kabbala, but deeply committed to the rhetorical tradition. Renaissance rhetoric itself was a complex intellectual discipline which was never far removed from both metaphysical and real political issues, although the common meaning of rhetoric has come to suggest the ornamental. Francis Bacon was indebted to much of this Renaissance thought and shared its concerns with such rhetorical proto-structuralist systems as the art of memory whose flowering and influence have been traced by Francis Yates.⁹ We are tempted to talk of a radical break, an epistemological rupture, in the narrative that we normally call the history of British philosophy, and to place it at the point where the new modes of thought reject scholasticism. Then we discover that there is more of the early thinkers than we care to admit in the supposed radicals. Gilson made this clear sometime ago in the roughly parallel case of Descartes. But it's usually supposed that in regard to British philosophy, any analogous affinities are to the nominalistic aspects of scholasticism. Such an account salvages the continuity of certain familiar themes, most notably nominalistic empiricism, in British philosophy but it does so by ignoring both the hermeneutic dimension of English thought and its formation in dialectical opposition to the discourses founded on analogy and similitude.

Michel Foucault argues in *The Order of Things* that there was a radical rupture in European thought around 1650, the approximate date of Descartes's *Meditations* and the *Leviathan*. Through the sixteenth century thought is governed by the various modes of resemblance: *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, analogy, and sympathies. English thought exhibits this concern with resemblance in the magical world of Shakespeare and in the ambitious visions of the harmony of macrocosm and microcosm in the works of such "occult" philosophers as Robert Fludd and John Dee. As Charles Peirce recognized, one important sense of "occult" is simply that which is not as yet known; to be an occultist was in part to be involved in a quest to think the unthought. Foucault says:

There does exist, however, in this space, furrowed in every direction, one particularly privileged point: it is saturated with analogies (and analogies can find their necessary terms there), and as they pass through it, their relations may be inverted without losing any of their force. This point is man: he stands in proportion to the heavens, just as he does to animals and plants, and as he does also to the earth, to metals, to stalactites or storms.¹⁰

Indicative of the shift in thought from man as microcosm to man as the locus of representation are three stages of man's appearance in philosophical texts. In the graphic, emblematic works of John Dee and Robert Fludd man appears as the microcosm, inscribed in the circular figure of the macrocosm. In Hobbe's *Leviathan* this rich graphic establishment of resemblances has been narrowed down to the title page depicting the state or Leviathan as containing a multitude of individual men; similarity there is reduced to something closer to identity, and the state is an artificial man. When English philosophy begins to take an epistemological turn with Locke, man is simply the place in which all ideas are registered and sorted and no longer a structural key to understanding things beyond him. He is the point at which all thought originates and to which it returns.

I am suggesting that we look more seriously at the complex series of operations by which the Renaissance world of similarities with its commitment to the hermeneutics of commentary and criticism came to be displaced by the epistemological project of grounding knowledge in sensory experience. However, such an inquiry should not be construed as a Heideggerian retrieval of a primal period that has been followed by a declination from true Being. Such a hermeneutical exploration of the roads not taken and forgotten possibilities of thought can help us to see what is unthought both in the canonical versions of the British tradition and in the forms of Anglo-American philosophy that invoke the canon when they have been pushed to a hermeneutical defense. Philosophy's general ambivalence concerning the unthought tends to emerge in its repression of significant aspects of its own history.

From the standpoint of social and economic history C. B. Macpherson has investigated political philosophy in the time of Hobbes and Locke as nascent bourgeois ideology, or *'The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism'*. While Macpherson is right to point out the way in which Hobbes and Locke tend to generalize bourgeois property rights into universally valid natural rights, he tends to neglect the wider context of thought within which such a transformation occurs. This context includes the other discourses with which these thinkers were in dialogue and their extensive concern with

reading and interpreting. Hobbes suggests in the structure of the *Leviathan*, for example, that his reader must begin by reading human nature in himself, go on to understand his own partial authorship of the commonwealth, proceed to interpret the Bible properly while learning what authorized interpretation is, and conclude by seeing the need for restricting certain texts because their tradition of commentary and criticism is conducive to "the kingdom of darkness."

From a more comprehensive point of view than Macpherson's it can be suggested that Hobbes's political innovation consists not merely in importing emergent private property relations into the laws of nature but also in articulating, perhaps for the first time, a truly bourgeois conception of hermeneutical activity. For what he succeeds in doing is elaborating a theory in which meanings come to be fixed, sovereigns can authorize a single incontestable interpretation, and the culture of interpretation is cleansed of those rhetorical and literary tendencies that render commentary and criticism always appropriate. It is the origin of bourgeois hermeneutics. Cultural meaning must now receive the stamp of the sovereign and becomes the ideological coin of the realm. In this respect Hobbes's dichotomy between absolute meaning and unrestrained multiplicity of meanings is continuous with later English language philosophy, which retains the exclusive choice of alternatives, even if it sometimes, like Quine, opts for its indeterminate side.

To continue our extension of Macpherson's insights, it would be illuminating to inquire how much the development from Hobbes to Quine parallels on the hermeneutic level what Marx has shown to be the progression of property relations from the simplest forms of production and exchange to the absurdities of equivalence and alienated value which characterize fully developed capitalism. In other words, just as Hobbesian property is either real goods or cultural meaning as guaranteed by the sovereign, so in advanced capitalist society all goods, fortunes and meanings (the last being described by Quine's indeterminacy of translation thesis) shift their identity, significance, and relations to one another by the constant flux of the economic and cultural system. Literary hermeneutics reflects this development by its division into the following sequence of stages: the period of heroic accumulation, in which all the emphasis is on the author's contribution and the impact of his *oeuvre*; the protection of capital investment, by the practice (e.g., of the New Critics) of seeing the infinite complexity and organic unity of the canonical texts; and the disper-

sions and disbursements of the consumer society, in which the texts become the pretext for the response of the reader, their own deconstruction or similar practices of dissemination.

Now let us reflect on the formation and institution of the empiricist canon that traditionally functions as a screen occluding our vision of the hermeneutic background and implications of Anglo-American thought. We observe that it takes a great deal of effort not to see that there are strong hermeneutic interests even in the philosophical work of Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Locke was compelled to argue with Sir Robert Filmer on the turf of Biblical commentary and exegesis which both shared with so many others. Berkeley's view of nature as the language of God and his later philosophical interests in Neoplatonism make him sound surprisingly like some of the Renaissance thinkers. Hume was dissatisfied with his *Treatise of Human Nature*; his later works show an increasing concern to incorporate or at least make essential reference to other discourses by the use of the essay form or by writing history. It has not been sufficiently noted that his last work, *The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, which he regarded as his masterpiece, is concerned with education and rhetoric as well as with the design argument and the problem of evil. Hume's hero Philo is not only a skeptic but a man of letters who at several crucial points in the dialogue bases his attack on the narrowly constructed and scientistic deism of Cleanthes on the interpretation of literary texts. Philo concludes the dialogue, we may remember, by claiming that "to be a philosophical skeptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian."¹¹ While it is the paradoxical deism of this concluding statement which has attracted the most attention, we might find in it an association of "the man of letters" and the skeptic which retains a distant echo of that pre-Hobbesian world of thought where the play of similarities is best observed through erudition and commentary and in which philosophical thought is closely linked to literary activity.¹²

The question of the canon in the history of philosophy, then, leads not only to questions about the canonical period, movement, or group of authors as opposed to apparently marginal or deviant texts but also to a closer look at whether the writings in the canon can in fact bear the interpretation which their canonization has placed upon them. In a sense we are always involved in the hermeneutic circle, because our conception of which authors, texts, and themes are of significance exists in a reciprocal relationship with our conception of what philosophy is today (or what it

was, following Hegel and Heidegger, or how it is ambivalently deconstructing itself, as for Derrida). Yet as Gadamer and others suggest, there is nothing absolutely closed or solipsistic about such a circle; it is open to the extent that it recognizes its own tentative character and is conscious that there is no unmediated contact with the objects of its concern. Rather, every tradition and author whom we try to understand is apprehended on the basis of an effective history. An informed narrative of the history of philosophy, then, will be one which realizes that Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume have themselves always already been read; that we must read them through and across their places in the curriculum, their incorporation by thinkers from Russell to Quine, and their place in more contemporary philosophical discussions. Here, too, effective history is not all of a piece and we must recall some of its varieties other than the one which is only now on the verge of relinquishing its hegemony.

"Continental" thought has, for example, tended to maintain a dialogue with Hobbes while shying away from the apparently reductive empiricism of Locke and Hume. Hobbes's concern with power and interpretation is a major stimulus to Spinoza's thoughts on similar topics and the idea that men are inclined to a "perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death" is taken up and transformed in the Hegelian, Marxian, and Nietzschean accounts of the dialectic of lordship and bondage.¹³ In other perspectives Locke emerges as a crucial figure in the inauguration of semiotics, or as anticipating Whitehead's vision of reality as a complex of actual entities of experience.¹⁴

In opposition to a subjectivist or relativist version of the hermeneutic circle, we must seek narrative accounts comprehensive enough to illuminate as many as possible of the lines of effective history which radiate from and around the primary subject of our inquiry. Only in that way can we gain some insights into the strategies which a hegemonic narrative employs and the questions which it leaves unanswered, that is, into all of that which is unthought in such narratives of philosophical history.

How does the paradigm of representation come to replace those of interpretation and power? Before answering that question let us note that Foucault's suggestive account of the transition, around 1650, from the *episteme* of resemblance to that of representation needs some modification in respect to British thought. Bacon and Hobbes announce the importance and centrality of the domination of nature and society, while not yet formulating or assuming the priority of epistemology and the representa-

tions with which it deals. Here then there are three paradigms which can be discerned: that of resemblance and similitude, that of power, and that of representation. The hermeneutic dimension is alive and well in the first; in the second, it is reduced to the interpretations authorized by sovereignty; while in the third it appears only as derivative from a representational thought that claims to be unmediated by any text. The *tabula rasa* which will be inscribed by the materials of sense takes priority over traditional texts and commentaries: this is the tendency which culminates in the eighteenth century's placing aesthetics, the study of the nature and grounds of a certain sort of experience, in the vacant space that belonged to interpretation and commentary. In terms of hermeneutic models there is a shift from a limited pluralism and polysemy of resemblance, to a conception of determinate meaning deriving from sovereign power, to that of a determinate meaning grounded in specific sensory experiences and in the laws of those experiences. (Hume's claim that historical interpretation must be based upon our knowledge of the universal laws of human nature is typical of this last phase.)

The appeal of the Locke/Berkeley/Hume model, or "Lockestep" version of British philosophy is that it shares with Hobbes the rejection of Renaissance pluralism while avoiding the harshness of an emphasis on relations of domination. The exclusion of the hermeneutic is made to seem natural by means of an epistemological foundationalism. The turn toward the paradigm of representation can be described in Freudian terms as the repression and sublimation of power. The canonical form of British empiricism dispenses with the concept of power; Hume's ultimate deconstruction of the concept is offered as the completion of the tendencies already immanent in the representational approach. The shift from power to representation occurs in both the philosophy of knowledge and of politics, although this parallelism has not been sufficiently noted. At the same time that Locke formulates his theory of ideas he argues for a form of representative government. We can see at work here what Foucault has pointed to as the combination of knowledge and power. Power establishes and develops itself by means of the structures of knowledge. In this case the state, which is tending toward an increasingly absolutist form, as foreseen by Hobbes, is legitimated by a philosophical view that obscures the fact of its power by an emphasis on representative relations.

Adorno suggested that the turn from the hermeneutic occurs in philosophy when philosophers come to work in groups and so become overly confident of the independence of their mutual discourse. It is certainly true

that the retrospective establishment of the conventional canon of British empiricism proceeded very rapidly from the mid-nineteenth century on as philosophy became established within the English speaking universities. In dealing both with the texts of the canon and with the event of canonization, we must remember Nietzsche's question "who is speaking?" The point of that question here is to call attention to the fact that the philosophers of representation produce a discourse that excludes as well as includes and which aims at establishing a total model applicable to both the political and the epistemological spheres. Similarly those who have been active in canonizing the philosophers of representation have been concerned to stabilize and insure their own discourse by making it seem as inevitable as that central image that Richard Rorty has called the mirror of nature. In order to discover who is speaking in such philosophical discourse, it is necessary to see which discourses are excluded, superseded, deliberately ignored, or dismissed in the dominant philosophical mode. The history of philosophy as a narrative activity ought not always to justify the practices of the present by showing them to be the reasonable development of an inevitable point of departure. The history of English philosophy (or philosophy in the English mode) can be kept from collapsing into either the discourse of the present or a simply diverse collection of differences by attending to its internal hermeneutic dimension in both its sublimated and explicit forms. This will help us to see that the turn toward textuality and even the interpretation of classical American philosophical texts in the works of Rorty and Cavell testifies neither to the end nor the fragmentation of the enterprise they represent. As Ricoeur has recently defined the task of the narrativist, we can say of such a construction of philosophical history that:

By reading the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end, we learn . . . to read time itself backward, as the recapitulating of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences.¹⁵

Notes

1. Paul Ricoeur, "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," in *History and Truth*, trans. Charles Kelby (Evanston, 1965), p. 76.
2. Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, translated by Samuel and Shierry Weber (London, n. d.), p. 234.
3. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minnesota, 1982), p. 149.
4. For an account of Hobbesian hermeneutics, see my paper "Reading and Writing in the Text of Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, April 1980.
5. See the allusions to Hobbes in "Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" and in some of Nietzsche's other writings of the early 1870's.
6. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (New York, 1972).

7. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hegel's 'Inverted World' " in *Hegel's Dialectic*, translated by P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, 1976). The classic recent discussion of the carnivalesque is Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).
8. For some signs of changes in accounts of Hobbes's scope and philosophical significance, see the Hobbes issue of *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*, April 1980, and the forthcoming book based on the proceedings of the Hobbes Tercentary Congress in 1979. Cf. also the remarks on Hobbes in Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York, 1966).
9. Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, 1966).
10. Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York, 1970), p. 22.
11. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, edited by Norman Kemp-Smith (Indianapolis, n. d.), p. 228.
12. See my article "The Man of Letters and the Author of Nature: Hume on Philosophical Discourse," in *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 1985.
13. Consider for example, the study which Leo Strauss and Alexander Kojève planned to write together on Hobbes and Hegel, cf. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, trans. Elsa Sinclair (Chicago, 1952), p. 58, n.1.
14. See John Deely, *Introducing Semiotics* (Bloomington, 1982), *passim* and A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*.
15. Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," in *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn 1980, p. 180.